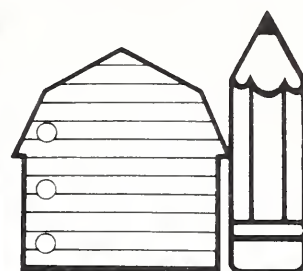


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Notes



April 1986
Vol. 1, No. 3

A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 232-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

Bringing Agriculture to the Big City

In Los Angeles, The University of California Cooperative Extension's Common Ground Garden Program has an exciting "hands on" approach to bring Ag to the urban classroom. Common Ground volunteers design and develop on-site school vegetable gardens and provide in-service training programs for schools throughout the city.

"Agriculture is California's largest industry, with one out of every three jobs related to the food chain," says David Millhauser, Cooperative Extension Urban Agriculture Coordinator. "A school garden has tremendous value as an Ag in the Classroom activity. Something as simple as watching a seed grow into a plant is often a unique experience for our inner city students who may live in neighborhoods devoid of parks, trees and open space."

Common Ground projects have brought other benefits to the urban community. In the Pico Union District of downtown Los Angeles, where many of the primarily Latino families have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, Common Ground organized a unique public/private partnership involving Cooperative Extension, Atlantic Richfield Company, the school district, the city of Los Angeles, Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment, and the Community Redevelopment Agency. As a result, a block-long vacant lot near the school has become a neighborhood project that includes a school garden, mini-park and play area, and a community vegetable garden where neighbors can grow some of their own food.

Yet the garden has done much more than reap a harvest of apples, peaches, strawberries, lemons, corn and tomatoes. There's new-found civic pride in the neighborhood. A 4-H club has formed at school. Buildings adjacent to the garden have been repainted. Graffiti-covered walls have become a beautiful mural. And children have gained hands-on experience with nature in the middle of our nation's second largest city — a city where many

elementary schools operate year-round and have more than 2,500 students.

Ag in the Classroom in Los Angeles does not end with a garden project. "Farm Day" is an annual event in selected schools, where 4-H members, college Ag students, Farm Bureau members and Common Ground volunteers work together with the schools to bring farm animals and equipment into schools for a day. "It is possible for 2,000 school children to view goats, cows, pigs, chickens, rabbits, horses, and a tractor, but it takes planning, and patience," says Millhauser, who, along with Mark Linder of Farm Bureau, have been instrumental in bringing the Farm Day program to the Los Angeles schools.

Millhauser also instructs a continuing education course for teachers at California State University, Los Angeles, entitled "Agriculture in the Urban Classroom."

Common Ground also offers a 200 page book called *Children's Gardens: A Field Guide for Teachers, Parents and Volunteers*. The guide, written by Elizabeth Bremner and John Pusey, with illustrations by Caroline Arnold, contains "recipes" for starting and maintaining a successful school gardening project and activities and special projects appropriate for children.



The Union Avenue neighborhood and the Tenth Street school share this community and school garden sponsored by the University of California Cooperative Extension's Common Ground Program.

National Meeting of Ag in the Classroom

In Washington, DC
June 9-10, 1986

At the Holiday Inn
Capitol

For state task force
members, volunteers,
and others actively
involved in AITC pro-
grams

Note: Reception at the
Holiday Inn Capitol
(500 C Street, SW) on
Sunday, June 8 from
7:00 pm -9:00 pm

From the Director

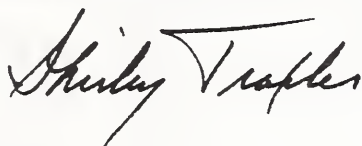
Dear Readers,

Volunteers are an important part of our Ag in the Classroom network. They serve on task forces, make classroom presentations, staff booths at fairs and exhibitions, write curriculum and provide many other valuable services.

In this and future issues of "Notes," you will read about their activities.

In many states, volunteers visit classrooms to talk with students about agriculture. Marsha Purcell of American Farm Bureau Federation has provided "Notes" with 10 tips to prepare volunteers for that enjoyable experience.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in June at the national conference. For those of you who can't attend, the next issue of "Notes" will give you some of the highlights.



Shirley Traxler

Hot Topic

Nearly 100,000 students will debate the future of our nation's agricultural policy in the 1986-87 National High School Debate Competition.

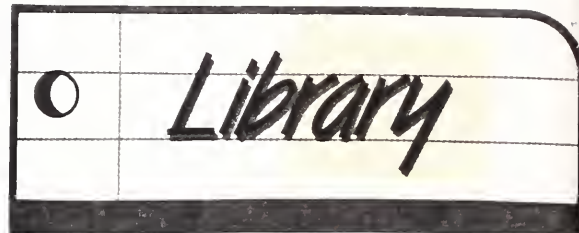
This year's debate topic is entitled, "What Agricultural Policy would best serve the economic interests of the United States?"

Dick Fawcett, of the National Federation of State High School Associations, which coordinates the competition, said the topic selection marks the first time in nearly 30 years that agriculture has been the subject of the national debate.

Actual debates will begin the first week in October, 1986, and continue through February and March. The nation's top teams will debate for a national championship during the third week in June, 1987.

Currently, the Congressional Research Service is preparing a preliminary bibliography and a reader which contains reprints of articles on agriculture. Both resources will be available through congressional offices later this spring.

Dr. Orville G. Bentley, Assistant Secretary for Science and Education, said "the competition is a great opportunity to raise the awareness of high school students to the challenges that face the American farmer. It is important that students in every part of the country understand that farm-policy decisions affect the future of all Americans."



For free seeds contact: The American the Beautiful Fund, 219 Shoreham Building, Dept. AC, Washington, D.C. 20005

Children's Gardens is available for \$8.14 postpaid from Common Ground Garden Program, 2615 South Grand Avenue, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90007

For more information about Science of Food and Agriculture magazine, contact: Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST), 137 Lynn Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010-7120

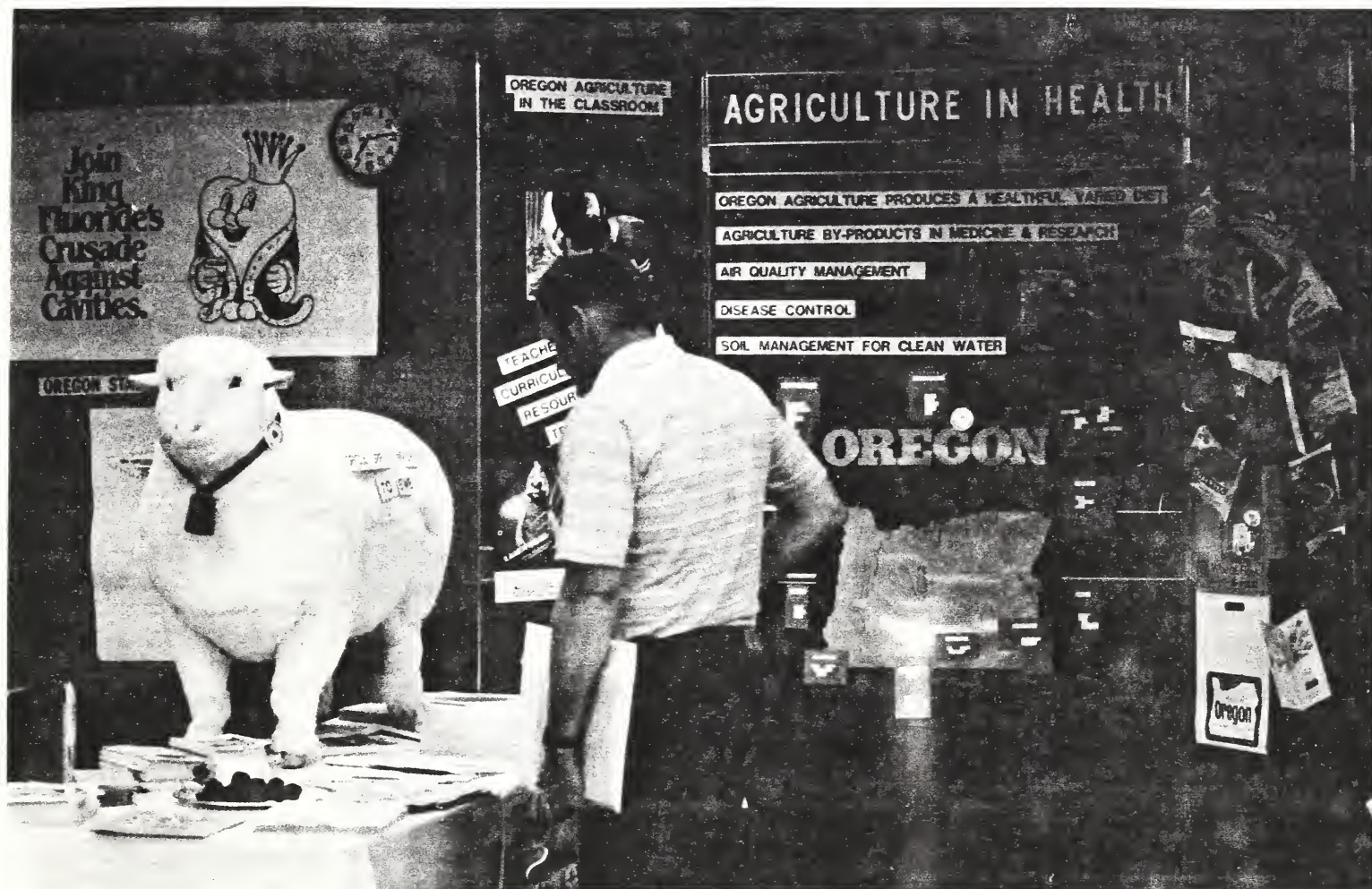
Tips for Training Volunteers

Volunteer training is a key to successful classroom presentations. Here are some tips:

1. Provide volunteers with the resources they need to prepare for unexpected questions.
2. Arrange for mini-seminars, where a specialist in a particular subject (such as farm labor or animal welfare) will train the volunteers.
3. Build confidence. Assure volunteers that they are the experts, which is why they have been invited.
4. Tell volunteers to cover only subject matter in areas in which they are comfortable.
5. Suggest to volunteers that they prepare additional material for presentation in case the students don't have any questions during the question/answer phase.
6. Encourage volunteers to meet in advance of the presentation with the teacher. The teacher can then help prepare the class for the presentation.
7. Tell volunteers to think in advance about all possible questions from students.
8. Suggest to volunteers that they practice their presentation in front of a mirror or family.
9. Encourage them to hook up with other volunteers for training. For example, in Illinois there are 18 volunteer state coordinators who help train new volunteers.
10. Suggest to volunteers that they bring postcards to their presentation. Should there be questions posed that the volunteer is unable to answer, the student can write the question on the card, and the volunteer can mail the answer to the student at a later date.

Spotlight

Volunteer Spotlight on Oregon



Farm Expo

A unique farm expo was attended by more than 1,000 3rd and 4th graders at the Benton County Fairgrounds. The expo was designed to help students understand their survival needs (food, clothing, shelter); to dramatize visually the story of today's agriculture; and to demonstrate the many steps involved in bringing food from the farm to the market. The theme of the expo was "There's a backdoor to the supermarket."

The expo was divided into 13 clusters, such as timber, poultry, cattle, wheat and bees. Each cluster began with the seeds of that crop or a baby animal. Students proceeded through the cluster to see special equipment and production techniques. Each cluster led to the supermarket at the expo's center to reemphasize the theme.

Many organizations volunteered to make the expo a great success. Kiwanis assisted in preparation, the American Association of Retired Persons

helped put the packets together, and 4-H and Future Farmers of America served as tour guides. Farm Bureau and Women for Timber were also on hand to assist.

Beef Council

Also in Oregon, the Beef Council has been active developing educational projects to be used in the classroom.

The Beef Council, in cooperation with the Oregon Cowbelles, conducted a tour for 1,000 4th graders from the Portland school district. The students were shown a slide show of life on a cattle ranch that featured ranch tools and beef by-products.

The Beef Council has also provided Oregon kindergarten and 1st grade teachers with the "Food Power Tower" nutrition kits. The kits focus on the 4 basic food groups. The Council also has distributed copies of an award-winning filmstrip kit entitled "Shaping a Nation: The Role of the

State teachers and agriculturists have been working together to incorporate agriculture into Oregon classrooms.

State Vounteers

Portland-area educators learned about state soil conservation programs at the annual meeting of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. Teachers were presented classroom materials by the USDA Soil and Water Conservation Service.

Also, many Portland high school students partici-

pated in the "Global Oregon Contest." The competition, designed to motivate students to learn about Oregon's timber and agricultural products was sponsored by the Oregon Women for Agriculture, the Agri-business Council of Oregon, Oregon Women for Timber, Oregon Farm Bureau Women and the Oregon Wheat Growers League.

This spring, the Oregon Association of Nurserymen's "Arbor Day" will also inform students about the nursery and timber industries.

April 1986

Evolution of "Get Oregonized"

"Get Oregonized" is a new textbook written by a group of Oregon teachers about the state's vast resource heritage — timber, water and agriculture. The book began as the brainchild of Rod Fiedler of Oregon State University.

"For some 25 years there had been no Oregon social studies materials available, and I knew that Oregon was simply too small a market to justify a major publishing house committing the venture capital necessary to produce a school textbook," said Fiedler.

"I developed a plan and convened several interested educators to critique my ideas. I contacted a school district in each geographic region of the state. 8 school districts agreed there was a problem. They were willing to fund a project to 'Oregonize' the curriculum by providing a grant of \$1,000 for each of 3 years, and to free 3 teachers for 5 school days each year to develop the book.

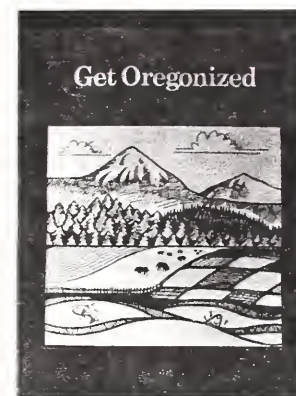
"The teachers began work in the Fall of 1983. We held 3 meetings at OSU that year to provide

curriculum research background for the teachers, and to assist them in developing content outlines.

"During 1983-84, \$17,145 was raised in gifts from alumni, businesses, clubs, industry and trade associations, and school districts. During 1984-85, \$37,071 was raised. The majority of these funds went to pay teacher honoraria (approximately \$16,000 per year). The remainder was used for continuing costs, such as typing and travel, as well as one-time costs in typesetting, drawing and graphic design.

"In 1984-85, we published 800 copies of field-test editions of 'Get Oregonized.' Writers and teachers were instructed to field-test their own sections by arranging for test sites in their own or nearby districts. Additionally, I arranged for independent field testing.

"The results of the 'Get Oregonized' field tests were highly positive, and we have since completed the statewide adoption process."



Cast Publication Available at a Discount

"Science of Food and Agriculture" is a general-interest magazine that informs teachers, students and others about scientific aspects of food and fiber production, while underscoring the many science career opportunities available in production agriculture and food manufacturing.

The magazine is a publication of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST), a consortium of 25 food and agricultural societies established in 1972 to disseminate scientific information about food and agricultural issues to the government, media and general public.

According to Gary Mulhall, CAST Vice President for Development, colleges of agriculture are beginning to use "Science of Food and Agriculture" for recruiting.

"The colleges are catching on to the magazine's potential for drawing the interest of top students in their states," says Mulhall. "The current enrollment situation calls for aggressive action, much like football and basketball programs for good athletes."

"Science of Food and Agriculture" is published 4 times a year (January, March, September and November). Individual subscriptions are \$10 annually. Schools and organizations may purchase

bulk subscriptions (magazines delivered to a single address) at a discount. Annual bulk subscriptions for 10-99 copies are \$5 each. For 100 or more copies, annual bulk subscriptions are \$4 each.

Free Seeds

Operation Green Plant, a program sponsored by the America the Beautiful Fund, is offering packets of free seeds to local civic and charitable groups for volunteer work.

Beginning in 1980, with the initial distribution of 60,000 seed packets, Operation Green Plant has distributed more than 5 tons of vegetable, flower and herb seeds to 10,000 projects in all 50 states. Projects have included: the starting of new educational programs; growing food for the needy; growing plants for charitable plant sales; beautifying neighborhoods and providing for the elderly, handicapped and confined. For more information, see "Library."

Palo Alto Students Take Up Farming

This past Fall, children at the Ohlone Elementary School in Palo Alto, California, started taking education into their own hands.

The students, aged 5 to 10 years, began farming

Student "farmers" prepare to plant an apple tree to kick off the Ohlone school farm in Palo Alto.



a 56 meter X 50 meter lot on school property that now contains a healthy garden, a budding orchard, a small animal area and a weather station.

"The school district had established a science emphasis this year, and this project ties perfectly with that emphasis," said project coordinator Bill Overton.

"We plan to set up a fruit stand and sell our apples to the public," continued Overton. "That way, the kids become part of the whole economic process — from seedling to tree, to harvest, to market, to the consumer."

In addition to farming the land and providing care for the animals, students are exposed to biology, zoology and horticulture in classroom instruction.

"Perhaps the greatest value of the farm is that it's in the kids' hands. Here they will get firsthand experience with taking responsibility. They'll learn that if they don't water the plants, the plants will die."

The farm has generated considerable interest in the local community as well as at the school. A parent farm committee, in addition to a student farm committee, has been formed to make suggestions on developing the land, planting crops and choosing animals.

Each classroom has established an individual garden plot, and work is nearly complete on hutches and coops for rabbits and chickens. There are also plans to add a goat and to build a small pond for ducks and turtles.

School principal James Mathiott congratulates students who have taken an active role in establishing this unique school project.



The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, please contact your representative. Or contact Shirley Traxler at U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

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